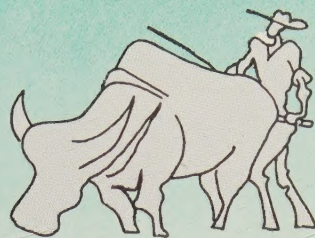


ILEIA

NEWSLETTER



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for
contest
indigenous
biotechnologies
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FOR LOW EXTERNAL INPUT AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



**Workshop report:
networking for LEISA**

**Farmers' networks
are the key**

**NGOs discover
benefits of networking**

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Cover photo: Networking through face-to-face contacts can be a valuable key to enhance LEISA. Let's work together! Photo: Chris Pennarts.

Joint efforts to reduce pesticide use

Shahid Talukder and Peter Kenmore

Many have argued that networks to promote LEISA should cut across traditional boundaries between governments and NGOs. The authors strongly support this view from their experiences in promoting Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Asia and describe ways to establish linkages between government institutes and NGOs.

The FAO Inter Country Programme for IPM has operated in 9 Asian countries since 1980. The results of the programme to date should not only be measured in terms of number of farmers trained and implementing IPM principles and techniques. Maybe equally important are the changes in policy leading to banning pesticides and sometimes removing pesticide subsidies. In the field of research and training, the programme has resulted in important changes through the introduction of non-formal education processes, of field-based experimental learning processes and of village-based participatory research projects among farmers, extension and universities.

Yet, for further developing, implementing and strengthening expanded IPM programmes, we feel that integration, interaction and linkages between NGOs and government now become a crucial factor. Both NGOs and government organisations have strengths and weaknesses and comparative advantages with certain interventions, especially for IPM programmes, which we would like to elaborate below.

GO and NGO core capacities

Governments in Asia generally have well-defined agricultural policies, structures and support agencies to carry out research, extension, training and credit services and the delivery of inputs to farmers such as seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides. It has well-defined structures and staff up to village level, who have basic knowledge and skills on field ecology, production agronomy and farming.

Priority activities of the NGOs are basically community organising, awareness raising and education, capacity building, health and environment and support services for income generating activities like credit and training. Usually, agricultural development is not a priority activity of NGOs. Due to resource constraints NGO outreach is relatively small. NGO staff are mostly multi-sectoral community development

workers with a social science background. Most of them do not have the technical capacity to deal with field ecology, production agronomy and farming.

Human resource development

Government approach of human resource development is highly content and product-oriented and is focused on developing skills and competence of people to do a pre-determined task or to implement a system or model as developed by researchers. The extension and training approach is very much top-down with limited participation of farmers in defining their needs and in developing the product or the models. Indiscriminate use of pesticides is often the result of such extension and training processes. On the other hand, NGOs are process oriented. They operate with a bottom-up and people-centred approach. The process of human resource development of NGOs is based on empowerment strategies and the training methodology is founded on experiential discovery learning principles. Farmers' participation and analysis and group dynamic processes are some of the key components of the NGO empowerment and community organising strategies. Due to their organisational skills and process orientation NGOs, would be in a position to encourage lateral spread of IPM through farmer to farmer training and farmers' action research processes. Lateral spread in the government sector may be possible through IPM-trained groups with "incentives" for farmer trainers.

Policy constituencies

National policy formulation towards IPM will require political will and commitment of the government to take decisions against the vested interest group (multi-nationals). Awareness and understanding of key policy makers, planners and politicians about the negative effect of pesticides on ecology, environment, health and economy is the number one step towards policy formulations. Several activities like pilot implementation of IPM programmes, dissemination of IPM research findings, information and experience sharing and a dialogue with policy makers and politicians may raise awareness about the need for IPM. At the same time, the NGOs with their multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral development approach can play a strong advocacy role in mobilising and creating ideas in favour of policy change.

Supporting research

Governments have institutional capacity to carry out academic and scientific research on important IPM policies and environmental issues. The strengths of NGOs are their process orientation and analytical ability. NGOs in general are experts in supporting community action research groups and process documentation. Often they are able to create national and international pressure on formulation of important development issues.

Farmers in the Philippines learn about IPM techniques. Insects are caught to study them and farmers learn to distinguish between pests and beneficial ones. Photo: Vickee Padilla.





GO-NGOs links within IPM

If these strengths of GO and NGOs are combined, IPM programmes could be very effective and both NGOs and GOs would be able to develop their management skills and competence by learning from each other. Linkages between government and NGOs can be established in the following fields:

- **Farmers' training.** At local level, government extension staff and NGO workers can collaborate in planning, implementing and evaluating farmers' training activities. Government IPM staff can act as facilitators/resource persons in dealing with technical contents in the NGO organised farmers' field schools. Similarly, NGO staff and trainers may be invited by local extension staff to facilitate non-formal education and group dynamic contents and processes in the farmers' field schools.

- **Staff training.** NGO trainers and specialists in non-formal education may be invited to join the national IPM trainers in designing training curricula and programmes for training of staff and trainers. NGO trainers can act as facilitators in conducting sessions on the principles, concepts and methodologies of experiential discovery learning and group dynamic processes and techniques.

- **Farmers' indigenous research processes.** Government extension staff, in collaboration with NGOs at local level, can plan and support research activities of farmers. The role of government extension staff would be to mobilise institutional resources (researchers) for interaction with the farmers. NGOs can take the facilitation and process documentation role.

- **Local government planning.** NGOs can participate in the local government planning of IPM activities. As such, they can share and exchange ideas and experiences of implementation in regular review meetings.

- **Planning, review and policy work-**

Members of NGOs and government organisations together visit a demonstration plot. Photo: Constant Dangebnon.

shops. NGO leaders may be invited to participate in national level policy and planning workshops. As implementing agencies, NGO representatives may participate in review and coordinating meetings at local, regional and national level.

- **Studies supporting IPM.** NGOs can share their experiences and results of farmers action research with the researchers of government research institutions conducting studies that support IPM.

Ensuring NGO participation

Finally, from the perspective of a government project, the following major activities need to be undertaken to ensure NGO participation in the implementation of IPM programmes.

A first step would be to identify interested NGOs and community organisations and conduct seminars and trainings in cooperation with national IPM staff. But NGO staff can also contribute to government training programmes. Participation of NGO trainers and non-formal education specialists could be ensured in designing and conducting training of trainers and training of government extension staff. These trainers could certainly benefit from training of trainers programme of the IPM training team.

Outside the training programme, IPM staff could provide technical support to NGOs through for example monthly follow-up of farmers' training activities by NGOs and supply of materials for their IPM training and extension activities. Assistance could also be provided in formulating project proposals for undertaking IPM activities. The IPM programme and NGOs could design and formulate joint participatory action research strategies and proposals for

Building NGO-GO bridges

The need for closer collaboration between NGOs and governments is easily acknowledged. In practice, however, there is a long history of misunderstanding and mistrust between the two. To further enhance LEISA it is a major challenge to find ways to break down these barriers and build bridges among these two parties. A workshop was held in Kisumu, Kenya, in September 1991 designed to play such a 'barrier-breaking' role. Organisers were Winrock International, the Overseas Development Institute, the Alley Farming Network for Tropical Africa, the Environmental Liaison Centre in Nairobi and ILEIA. Interest for the workshop was unexpectedly high with more than 60 participants, mostly from East Africa.

The basic idea of the workshop was that bridges can be built if one brings NGO and government staff together in well-designed sessions, to discuss in an open atmosphere issues of common concern. 'Farmer Participatory Research' was selected to be the topic for this particular workshop as in this approach NGOs and government agencies clearly have complementary roles and need each other to be effective.

The workshop followed two main lines. One was the study of participatory research methods and trying these out in the field. For this purpose government and NGO staff worked together intensively in small teams. Especially the experience of doing village studies together and seeing each others roles helped to increase understanding of what good collaboration could mean. The second line of the workshop was the study of possibilities and constraints in enhancing NGO-GO collaboration. Here, experiences of participants regarding strengths and weaknesses of both parties were put in the open and then 'translated' in terms of opportunities and challenges for collaboration. During the workshop, participants, while discussing collaboration, were actually practicing it and learning from this experience.

Proceedings of this workshop are under preparation. **For more information contact:** Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development, Mrs. Diana de Treville, RT 3, Morrilton Arkansas 72110 USA.

IPM. The IPM farmers' field school may be an appropriate place for further training of staff in this research approach. ■

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